

Armadillidium vulgare (Latreille). Sandy shore at Pinbain Bridge, Lendalfoot, Ayrshire, V.C.75. (NX 137914), 6 June 1993, JMCC et al.

A. pulchellum (Zencker). Monreith, Wigtownshire, V.C.74 (NX3-4-), 1994, JMCC.

The latter species is the less common of the two, and is much smaller than *A. vulgare*; it has attractive orange and yellow markings. Both species characteristically roll into a ball when disturbed, hence the common name.

Swordfish from Loch Fyne

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The swordfish or broad-bill swordfish, *Xiphias gladius* Linnaeus, 1758, is the only member of the family Xiphiidae. It is characterised by its pointed snout (sword) which is flattened and oval in cross-section (Fig.1).

The swordfish is generally an uncommon fish in the seas of north-west Europe. It is found in temperate and warm-temperate seas throughout the world, and is relatively common off the Iberian Peninsula and in the Mediterranean. It occurs in cooler regions, such as around the British Isles only in summer and late autumn, and then only when oceanic currents have brought warm water further north than usual (Wheeler, 1975). It sometimes strays as far north as Iceland. They are only occasionally stranded and so the finding of the remains of one at the head of Loch Fyne in August 1994 is unusual and notable.

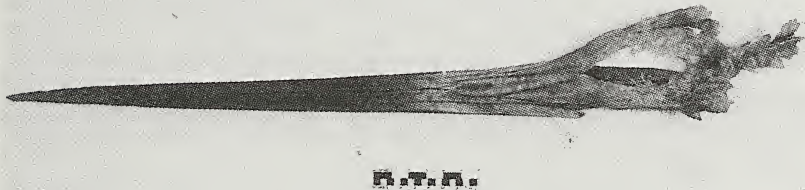


Fig.1: The skull and sword of the Loch Fyne Swordfish (Scale line = 15cms.)

The remains of the fish were discovered about 100m from the shore at the head of Loch Fyne, directly opposite Loch Fyne Oysters Ltd. The presence of large numbers of gulls around the spot for some time, alerted the local Ardkinglas Estate's head shepherd, Alastair McCallum, to the presence of the fish. When he investigated, he found that the fish has already been reduced to little more than a skeleton. The skull, vertebrae, some fins and a few other bones were collected and taken to Loch Fyne Oysters Ltd. Glasgow Museums were alerted to the presence of the fish and the author visited the site on 25 August and was able to find the remains of more fins, another vertebra and other fragments of bone.

Swordfish grow to a large size; specimens 11 feet (3.3m) long have been reported in British waters (Wheeler, 1969). The skeleton of the Loch Fyne swordfish measures 8 feet (2.4m) in length. It may have measured slightly longer than this, since a few vertebrae appear to be missing. The size suggests that the fish when alive may have weighed about 150-160lb (45.7-48.7kg). The skull and sword measured 3 feet 7 inches (1.09m) in length.

The skeleton has been donated to Glasgow Museums by Mr Andrew Lane of Loch Fyne Oysters Ltd. (accession number: Z.1994.118). It will be cleaned and put on public display in due course.

There are very few records of swordfish being stranded on the west coast of Scotland. One was stranded somewhere on the Ayrshire coast and another came ashore below Dundarave Castle above Inveraray, Argyllshire in 1904 (Hamilton, 1986). Gladstone (1914) reported the stranding of one at Annan, Dumfriesshire in 1913. Bagenal (1965), however, does not mention any records of the species from the Clyde Sea Area. One was stranded on the shore of Loch Caolisport, Kintyre in August 1972. The skull was collected and was supposedly later donated to Bradford Museum (Hamilton, 1986). However, there is no record of such a donation and the museum does not have a swordfish skull in its collection (M.M.Hartley, pers. comm.). Another specimen was apparently stranded in the same area within 3 weeks of it (W.Little, pers. comm.).

References

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Some records of myriapods and slugs new for the Glasgow area

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In 1991 a millipede of the genus *Brachychaeteuma* was found in a garden in Partickhill Road, Glasgow (NS 5566) by Dick Jones, organiser of the national millipede recording scheme. This was the first record of the genus in Scotland but unfortunately it was immature and could not be identified to species. Since then, two species have been found in Scotland : *B. bagnalli* Verhoeff in Kirkcudbrightshire, V.C. 73, and *B. bradeae* (Brolemann & Brade-Birks) in E. Perthshire, V.C. 89, (Jones, 1994). Unidentifiable immature specimens have also been found recently in Midlothian, V.C.83. A visit to the Partick site on 5 November 1994 failed to re-find *Brachychaeteuma* but produced several other scarce myriapods not hitherto recorded in the Glasgow area as shown in the preliminary atlases : British Millipede Group (1988), Barber & Keay (1988). They are all small species obtained by sieving leaf-litter and top-soil.

Millipedes

Melogona scutellare (Ribaut). A cylindrical off-white species not shown north of the border in the Atlas but recently recorded at several sites in Fife and the Lothians.

Blaniulus guttulatus (Fabricius). A slender cylindrical millipede, white with bright red spots, well known in gardens in England but scarcer in Scotland although widely recorded from Argyll and Angus southwards.

Archiboreoiulus pallidus (Brade-Birks). A slender cylindrical white millipede with pale orange spots, recorded recently at several sites from Dundee to Berwickshire and Lanarkshire, but not elsewhere in the west of Scotland.

Boreoiulus tenuis (Bigler). Very similar to the last; widespread in Fife and the Lothians, sparsely recorded elsewhere in Scotland.

Macrosternodesmus palicola Brölemann. A tiny (4mm) white flat-backed millipede unrecorded in Scotland until recently when it has been found at a number of sites in the south and east.

Centipedes

Lithobius microps Meinert. The smallest species of *Lithobius*, common in leaf-litter in England and recorded sparsely north to Perthshire in the east, but not hitherto in the west of Scotland.